

Digital Identity Assignment

In *Ready Player One*, Ernest Cline created two complex worlds and characters that inhabited both. Through this project, you will explore what it is like to create an avatar to serve as your anonymous, digital representation in an online forum. This is a semester-long project that will involve the use of an online discussion board through the course of the class and will conclude with a reflection paper.

Part 1.

Create an account on the message board. Use a pseudonym (ex: Wade used Parzival) and an image of your choice to represent you in the forum. Email your instructor once your account has been created with a link to the account (name of the account) so that you may be invited to the class discussion board. No one else in the class, however, should know who your account/avatar represents.

While creating the account and selecting an avatar name/representation, consider these things for your future reflection paper:

- How closely does your avatar physically represent you? As with Art3mis, do you create an avatar that resembles you closely? Or do you take Aech's route and select one that is very different?
- What was your inspiration for naming your avatar?

Part 2.

There will be a discussion post each week to the message board. You will need to respond to the post itself and at least one other response to the post. (+1, ITA, SMH, and other one-liners that do not contribute to the discussion will not be counted.)

- How does having a pseudonymous voice on the message board impact the way you interacted with your peers online?
- Do you find yourself more comfortable taking part in the online discussion or the in-class discussion?



Part 2.

Write a one page reflection paper looking back over the semester long project, using the questions provided in the previous sections. How has participated in the online message board influenced your participation in class? Or your understanding of the subject matter?

For Instructors:

Message boards/discussion forums/platforms that can be used include:

- K-State Blogging network (blogs.ksu.edu)
- Blogger (students create pseudonymous profiles and respond to posts on class blog)
- Dreamwidth (students create accounts and join class community - this has the added benefit of allowing students to further explore pseudonymous account on internet by blogging to personal accounts)
- Google Groups (students create pseudonymous accounts and join class GGroup)

Discussion post ideas

- NY Times in the First Year or NY Times in Leadership articles
- Discussion of weekly events

Organization ideas

Depending on the class "week", suggest/require students respond to the discussion post within the first half of the "week". The response to a post by one of their colleagues can take place then, if there are responses available, or later in the week. This avoids students waiting until the last week to respond and making it difficult for their colleagues to respond to their posts.

Further discussion:

Use this as an opportunity to discuss online presence and social media, how can social media that is connected to their "real" name hinder or help them.

